



# GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



## Session 4: Galatians 1:21-2:4

### Galatians 1:21-24 | Paul's Early Ministry before the Mystery

- Verse 21 –
  - This is after the third-year visit to Jerusalem. This is presumably the visit we read about in Acts 9:30 (Tarsus was in Cilicia). There is passing reference to this in Acts 11:25.
- Verse 22 –
  - Paul is arguing that he did not receive the mystery from men. He continues his argument by saying that, while in Syria and Cilicia, he was **unknown by face unto the churches of Judea**. These Judean assemblies were under Peter's care, and Paul was not involved in their work or ministry.
  - These believers were necessarily **in Christ** prior to the mystery being revealed to them by Paul. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to say that they were not saved. Instead, we would say that they were not saved in the same manner as Paul and others who follow after his pattern in the age of Grace. (See also [Romans 16:7](#)).
- Verses 23-24 –
  - In verse 23 Paul switches pronouns, seemingly speaking from the perspective of the Judean assemblies, quoting them as saying, **he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed**.
  - In verse 24 we have a valuable insight as to the timing of the mystery.
    - If the Judean churches **glorified God in me**, then they believed that he was teaching according to **the faith which once he destroyed** (v. 23), and this faith was the Kingdom-Gospel message of Peter.
    - If Paul had received the mystery at this time, then the churches of Judaea would not have been so eager to glorify God due to the fact that the message of Peter and Paul would have been at conflict.

### Galatians 2:1-14 | Paul Reveals the Mystery

- Prior to these chapters there is no definitive declaration that the mystery had been given to Paul. As the previous verses suggest, Paul did not receive the mystery prior to his visit to Syria and Cilicia.
- Verse 1 –
  - This is **fourteen years** after the third-year visit. That makes it at approximately 52AD.
  - Barnabus had been with Paul much of this time (see [Acts 11:25](#)). Barnabus was clearly a Jew living under the Law, as was Paul. Titus, however, was gentile (see v. 3).
  - This Jerusalem meeting is commonly known as the Jerusalem Council, and is also found in Acts 15.
- Verse 2 –
  - Paul went to Jerusalem **by revelation** or *according to revelation* (as the same Greek phrase is translated in [Romans 16:25](#)).
    - It could have been that he had a revelation to go to Jerusalem.
    - More likely, however, his common sense sent him to Jerusalem to talk about the revelation which he had received. This latter view (which I hold) aligns with [Acts 15:2](#).
  - Paul **communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles**.

- This is the first time that we have official record that his Gospel is different than Peter’s Gospel (19 years after Pentecost!).
    - Most of the Christian world refuses to believe that the Gospels are any different, but such a view fails to take Scripture literally.
    - Why would Paul go **privately to them which were of reputation** if they were preaching essentially the same Gospel?
    - Somewhere between 38 and 52 AD Paul received the revelation of the mystery of salvation by *grace through faith not of works* and was now (52 AD) teaching that to the Apostles in Jerusalem.
  - Some supporting notes from CI Scofield:
    - *“To Paul also was committed that body of truth concerning salvation which forms what he calls “my gospel,” and which is the great doctrinal basis of Christianity.”<sup>1</sup>*
    - *“And this question of the source of Paul’s teaching, permit me to remind you, is by no means an obsolete question of interest only in the first century. It is a burning question today, in the twentieth century. Men speak of “Pauline” theology, as if Paul were a mere theologian, the framer of a system of Christian doctrine—a system with which one may disagree, in whole or in part, and still be a good Christian. Against these, as against the objectors of the first century, the truth runs that Paul spoke, even as to the very words (1 Cor. 2:13), not as a system-maker, but as the mouth of God.”<sup>2</sup>*
- Verse 3 –
  - This note about Titus is almost a parenthetical statement, but essential to understanding of the situation. [Acts 15:1](#) reveals that the teaching from Judaea was that **Except ye be circumcised after the manner of mooses, ye cannot be saved.**
  - Paul was teaching something that was radically different.
- Verse 4 –
  - The beginning of the verse (**And that because of...**) likely connects back to verse 2. Paul went **by revelation** (see note on v. 2) *and also because of false brethren...*
  - These **false brethren** were **unawares brought in** though they had ulterior motives: **to spy out our liberty** and to **bring us to bondage.**
    - Evidently, they heard that Paul’s Gospel was not aligned with Peter’s, and they came as self-appointed messengers to straighten out the situation.
    - Had Paul and his assembly known of the intentions of these men, they would not have welcomed them in.
  - The men were **false brethren** not in the sense of insincere or even in the sense that they taught something different than Peter taught. Rather, they were false because they **came in privily** as if they adhered to Pauline teaching.
    - Their purpose was not to fellowship, serve, and learn, but rather to **spy out our liberty** and to **bring us into bondage.**
    - The Greek word κατασκοπέω [kataskopeo] is translated **spy out**. It is the ultimate extension of *skopeo*, to look or observe.
- Verse 5 –
  - Paul speaks in the strongest of terms, and does so because **the truth of the gospel** is at stake.
  - Any act of personal righteousness added as a requirement for salvation is not the Gospel of the church in this dispensation and should not be tolerated, **no, not for an hour.**

<sup>1</sup> C. I. Scofield, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Greenville, SC: Gospel Hour, 1903), 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 10.